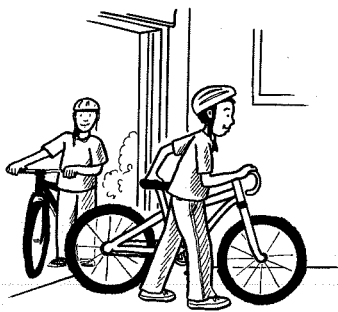


Building Better Behavior



Good behavior is a habit all parents can try to instill in their children, but it doesn't happen overnight. Use patience and the strategies in this guide to help you lay a foundation for good behavior at home and at school.

Give positive attention. Try to set aside a little uninterrupted time with your child each day, and let her take the lead in deciding how to spend it. She might want to have a special story time with you or take a walk around the neighborhood to talk about the day. She'll feel more important and secure—and be less apt to misbehave in an effort to make you notice her. *Tip:* While you're enjoying each other's company, be sure to give her your total attention. Turn off distractions like your cell phone or the television.



Set ground rules. Your youngster may be more likely to behave if he knows exactly what you expect. Talk

about the rules for behaving at home and in public. These might include things like keeping his hands to himself and listening quietly when others are speaking. Remember, you know your child best—choose rules that fit his age and abilities. As he gets older, you can update the rule list. *Tip:* To help everyone remember the rules, post them where they can be seen. Also, state them in a positive way. Instead of "Don't leave your bike on the driveway," write, "Put your belongings away when you finish using them."

Discuss consequences. The best time to talk about consequences is before a rule is broken. Let your youngster know in advance what will happen if she misbehaves or breaks a rule. For instance, you could say, "If you put your bike in the garage, you will be able to ride it tomorrow." *Tip:* Involve your child in deciding fair punishments for breaking rules.

continued

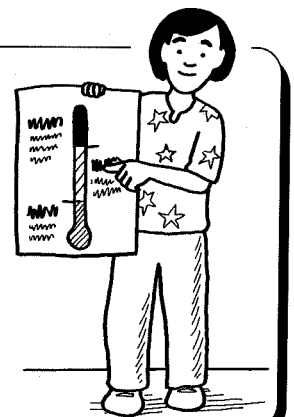
A measure of self-control

This activity can help your youngster practice taking control of her own behavior.

1. Help her draw a thermometer on paper and add horizontal lines to divide it into thirds. She can color the bottom third blue and label it "Keeping my cool." Have her color the middle section yellow and write "Getting warmer." And she should color the top portion red and label it "Danger zone."
2. Together, brainstorm a list of ideas she can use to control herself when her "temperature" starts to rise. For instance, if she's starting to feel frustrated (perhaps her brother makes a

face at her), she might close her eyes and take a deep breath. If she's entering the danger zone (say, she feels like hitting him), she could walk away for a few minutes and cool down.

3. Let her write the ideas on the paper. Then, hang up the thermometer where it can remind her that she is in control of herself.





Point out benefits of behaving well. When your youngster sees the results of good behavior, he may try harder to stay on course. You can reinforce the idea by mentioning the positive consequence in connection with his behavior. “Sam, since you did all your chores without being reminded, we’ll have an extra half-hour to spend at the park.” *Tip:* It may be tempting to “bribe” your child to behave well, but this can make him dependent on rewards in the future. Skip the sticker or candy in favor of a more natural reward (say, time for an extra bedtime story because he got ready quickly).

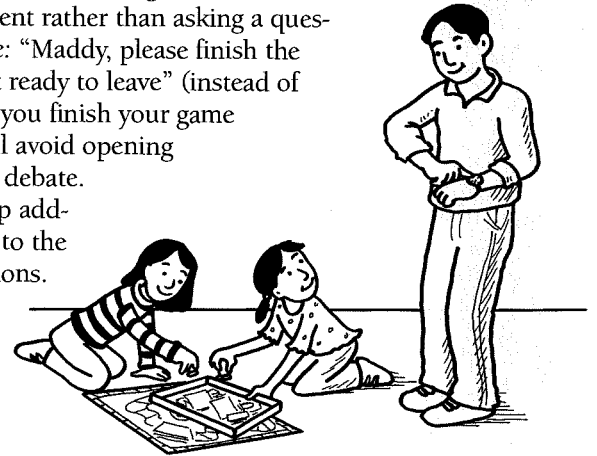
Catch your child being good. Look for times when your youngster is behaving well, and praise her for it. Try to make your compliment specific: “I know you’re disappointed your brother got to pick the cereal—you handled it nicely.” Pointing out what she did right helps her recognize good behavior so she can repeat it in the future.

Use logic. It’s easier for your child to understand cause and effect if the consequences are related to his misbehavior. For example, if he skates without his helmet, it makes more sense to take away the skates than to take away dessert. *Tip:* Where appropriate, use “make it better” consequences that encourage your youngster to correct his behavior in a positive way. If he knocks down his sister’s block tower, he could help her rebuild it, for instance.

Use statements instead of questions. When you expect your child to do something, tell her in a clear, polite statement rather than asking a question. *Example:* “Maddy, please finish the game and get ready to leave” (instead of “Maddy, can you finish your game now?”). You’ll avoid opening the door to a debate.

Tip: Also, skip adding, “Okay?” to the end of directions.

It makes it sound like your request is optional. Rather than saying, “Let’s get ready to go, okay?” just say, “Let’s get ready to go.”



Be consistent. Even the most well-behaved youngster will act up or test the rules occasionally. When that happens, the best idea is to stick to your rules and consequences for breaking them. Knowing that you will respond exactly the same way every time he misbehaves can motivate your child to make better choices.

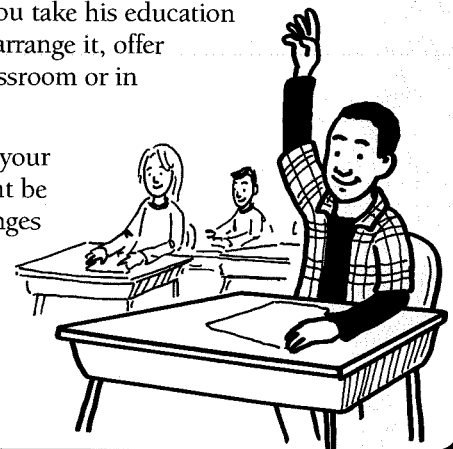
When behavior is a problem at school

If your child acts out at school, what should you do? Here are some strategies to try:

- Be a team player. Meet with the teacher to discuss ways you can work together to improve the situation.
- Communicate regularly. Find out which method the teacher prefers (notes, emails, phone calls). Ask her to tell you about your youngster’s good days as well as the not-so-good ones. That way, you can praise him for his good behavior as well as talk to him about problems.
- Try to keep expectations consistent between home and school. Let your child know that you expect good behavior in both places. For example, if talking out of turn is the problem at school, remind him not to interrupt at home.

- Volunteer. When you are active in your youngster’s school, you show him that you take his education seriously. If you can arrange it, offer to help out in his classroom or in the cafeteria.

Note: If you think your child’s behavior might be related to family changes or other stress, or could have a physical cause, check with his school counselor or his pediatrician.



STEPS TO Homework Success



When your children do homework, they reinforce what they learned at school and expand their knowledge. But they learn more than the information in their assignments—they also build study skills and habits that they'll need throughout school and life.

Here are ways you can provide support and help your youngsters succeed with their homework.

BEFORE

Create a study area

Many children work best in a special study area, such as at a bedroom desk or the kitchen table. However, some youngsters do better sprawling on the living room floor or sitting on their bed. Consider letting your child decide where he'll work—he's more likely to stay on task when he's comfortable. Regardless, his work area should have adequate lighting and homework supplies, such as pens, pencils, paper, a ruler, a calculator, and a dictionary.

Get assignments

Remind your youngster that it's her job to write down assignments in school. She may need to copy them from the board or write them in her agenda as her teacher talks. When she gets home, check that she has the instructions and handouts she needs—you'll help her get in the habit of bringing home her assignments the day they're given.



Make a daily plan

Glance over your child's homework, and help him come up with a study plan. You might suggest that he tackle tougher or

longer assignments first while he's fresh and alert. He should be able to follow most homework instructions without supervision, but let him know you're available to discuss them.

Break projects into steps

Encourage your youngster to use a calendar to stay on schedule as she works on a project. Have her divide each project into steps and write them on the calendar. A science project, for example, might include steps like: develop hypothesis, conduct experiment, record results, write lab report. *Tip:* She may need your help breaking assignments into chunks and choosing deadlines.



Team with teachers

Ask your child's teacher about homework rules and how she would like you to help (or not help) him. Find out what kinds of assignments your youngster should expect. Provide your phone number and email address, and encourage the teacher to contact you if problems arise. The sooner you are aware of an issue, the more quickly a solution can be found.

continued

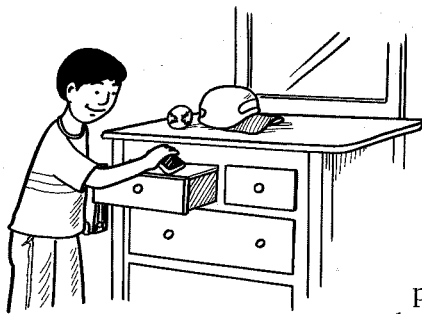
DURING

Keep a routine

Starting homework at the same time each day can make learning a habit for your child. Have her try a couple of different times to see what works best. Possibilities include immediately after school, before dinner (but after she has had time to play), or after dinner.

Increase concentration

Some youngsters need calm surroundings to focus on homework. Others may study better with background music. But television is too much for anyone to ignore. Your child



should keep the set off during study time so his mind is tuned in to his homework. Likewise, if he has a cell phone or a handheld video game system, have him turn it off and put it out of sight so that he isn't distracted during homework time.

Have family quiet time

Whenever possible, try to match your household's schedule with your youngster's study time. If homework is done from 7 to 8 p.m. each day, make this a quiet time for the entire family. Do paperwork or read alongside your child while she studies. This will help her stay focused.

Provide support

If your youngster is stuck, guide him in the right direction rather than providing the answers. For example, instead of answering his question, "Mom, how many feet are in a mile?" ask, "How do you think you can figure that out?" Your child will learn to work independently and to problem-solve. *Tip:* When he would benefit from your assistance, offer to pitch in. For instance, you could quiz him on spelling words or multiplication facts.

Give reminders

A simple prompt ("Finished that poem?") may be all that's needed to encourage your youngster to complete a project. But watch for signs that she's frustrated or seems to be spending too much time on her homework. If she consistently has trouble finishing assignments, ask her teacher for advice.



AFTER

Check homework

Take a moment to inspect your child's work when he's finished. Knowing that you will be looking at his assignments increases the chance that he will finish them *and* do his best. Check to see that his work is neat and complete. If you find several misspelled words or calculation errors, ask him to look over it again. But you shouldn't correct his work—that's his responsibility. Plus, mistakes show the teacher where your youngster needs help.

Boost confidence

Praising hard work as you notice it encourages your child to keep learning. A warm comment ("Nice job on those division problems") can give her confidence when she tackles her next assignment. Remember, the right attitude can make a big difference!



Find ways to improve

When graded homework is returned, look for the teacher's notes. These tell you if your youngster understood the assignment or where he went wrong. If he received a poor grade, ask him to think about the reasons. Did he copy the assignment correctly? Did he follow the instructions? Discovering what went wrong can keep him from repeating mistakes.

Talk about learning

You can stay up to date on what your child is learning in school by talking with her regularly about her homework. For instance, during dinner you could ask, "How is your geography project coming along? What have you discovered so far?" Or while you're in the car, the two of you might look for words on that week's vocabulary list and discuss their meanings.

Save assignments

Help your youngster create a system for filing returned homework. He might keep each subject in a different color folder. Then, he can use the papers to study for tests and quizzes. *Idea:* Suggest that he post ones he did especially well on—they can be a source of encouragement when he struggles with an assignment.

Tip: The key is for you to stay involved and monitor your child's homework without doing it for her. With your guidance and encouragement, your youngster will learn how to work independently and plan for success.

Home & School CONNECTION®

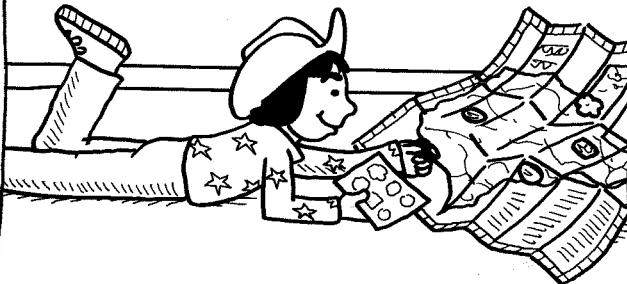




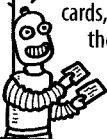

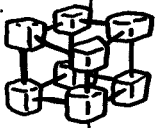




Have your child fill in this calendar with the month and dates. Then, hang it on your refrigerator, and encourage your youngster to do an activity every day.

Learning Activity Calendar

						MONTH	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<p>Start a conversation journal. Take turns writing a daily question ("What do you like best about the county fair?"), and ask family members to add their answers.</p>				<p>Count the pretend money in a board game. If you divide it evenly among all players, how much will each person get?</p>		<p>Find all the adjectives in a magazine ad. Replace each adjective with a funny one, and read your silly creation aloud.</p>	
<p>Be a meteorologist for a day. Record the high and low temperatures. Take notes on the weather conditions you observe.</p>	<p>Make a postcard about your favorite place in town. Draw a picture on one side of an index card, and write a review on the other.</p>	<p>Read aloud to a parent or sibling, and experiment with using different voices. You might hiss like a snake or boom like a giant.</p>	<p>Write a script for a new episode of your favorite cartoon. Where does the action take place? What is the conflict? How is it resolved?</p>	<p>Cut out newspaper photos showing various angles (right, acute, obtuse) and sets of lines (parallel, perpendicular). Make a collage with them.</p>	<p>Draw an S-shaped path on cardboard. Hold a magnet under the cardboard, and use it to steer a paper clip along the path.</p>	<p>Take turns secretly choosing a household product and reading the label aloud. Example: "Leaves your breath minty fresh." Can family members guess your item?</p>	
<p>Help make sandwiches for lunch. Cut them into different fractions (halves, thirds, fourths, eighths).</p>	<p>Use Scrabble tiles to play a spelling game. On each turn, think of a word, and mix up the letters for the other person to unscramble.</p>	<p>Identify plant parts (fruit, leaf, stem, root) in vegetables at home or in the grocery store. For instance, spinach is a leaf, and a carrot is a root.</p>	<p>Draw a map of an imaginary town. Then, build the town using blocks and other toys.</p>	<p>Organize a shelf of stuffed animals by putting them in alphabetical order (armadillo, bear, cat).</p>	<p>Use objects (barrette, pencil, spoon) to measure household items. How many pencils long is the table? How many spoons wide is the TV?</p>	<p>Write down all the ways you can think of to say went (zoomed, traveled, galloped). Use your list to write an action-packed story.</p>	
<p>Pick 10 unfamiliar words from the dictionary. Write the words and their definitions on separate index cards. Shuffle, and try to match the words and definitions.</p>	<p>Go walking, and fill each cup of an egg carton with a rock. When you get home, try to identify them using a guidebook or website.</p>	<p>Find out if your favorite comic strip uses more nouns or verbs. Circle the nouns in one color and the verbs in another. Then, tally them.</p>	<p>Use a newspaper to research family activities to do. Write descriptions of a few (circus, movie night) on a calendar.</p>	<p>Draw a horizontal line on an index card, and hold it behind a jar of water. Look through the jar at the line. It appears to bend—this is called refraction.</p>	<p>Look for words in other languages. You might see a Korean market sign or a Spanish bumper sticker. Read a book or go online to learn about the countries.</p>	<p>Make a list of things you read today. Ask other family members to do the same, and compare your lists.</p>	
<p>Put a set of magnetic letters in a bag. Take turns picking one letter at a time. See who can make a word first.</p>	<p>A nocturnal animal's eyes have large pupils, which help it see at night. Hold a mirror in a dark room. When your eyes adjust to the dark, turn on the light, and watch your pupils shrink.</p>	<p>Think of a person you know with a job you might like to do someday. Write five questions about the job. Then, call to interview the person.</p>	<p>List the numbers 1–20 on paper. Find household objects to match each number (12 eggs, 16 chair legs). Write the name of the item next to the number.</p>				

Have your child fill in this calendar with the month and dates. Then, hang it on your refrigerator, and encourage your youngster to do an activity every day.

Learning Activity Calendar

MONTH						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<p>List the places you've visited in your state. Then, find each one on a map, and put a sticker on it.</p>	<p>Play action-word charades. Write verbs (<i>float, eat, twirl</i>) on slips of paper. Take turns drawing slips and acting them out for others to guess.</p> 	<p>Place a hula hoop in the grass. Use a magnifying glass to observe what's inside. List living and non-living things you see.</p>	<p>Use a search engine to look up a favorite author's address. Send the author a note about why you like his or her books.</p> 
<p>How many ways can you sort a deck of cards? Experiment to find out.</p> 	<p>Write each family member's name on a piece of paper. Pass the papers around, and write a nice <i>simile</i> (a comparison that uses <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>) about each person. Example: "Mom's eyes sparkle like sunlight."</p>	<p>Color on paper with sandpaper under it and on paper lying on a smooth surface, like a countertop. The sandpaper's bumpy texture causes <i>friction</i> — how does this affect your coloring?</p> 	<p>Secretly pick a U.S. president, and ask a friend to do the same. Take turns giving clues and trying to guess each other's choice.</p> 	<p>Read a non-fiction book about a favorite topic, like robots. Use facts you learn to make trivia cards, and share the cards with a parent.</p>	<p>Clip newspaper coupons for products your family uses (detergent, pasta). Add up the discounts to find out how much money you could save.</p>	<p>Practice creative writing by thinking of "why" questions ("Why is the sky blue?") and writing imaginary answers ("Because a rocket spilled a can of blue paint").</p>
<p>Leave a lollipop in a bowl of warm water for 30 minutes. What happens to the candy?</p>	<p>Carry pencil and paper in the car to keep track of traffic lights. Graph the number of red lights vs. green lights.</p> 	<p>Name an activity (gardening, chess). Each player writes as many related words as he can in 2 minutes. Score a point for each word no one else wrote.</p>	<p>Read a story that takes place in another country. Compare daily life in the book to your life. How is it the same or different?</p>	<p>Use modeling clay and toothpicks to make 3-D shapes. Start with a cube, and then try a pyramid. What other shapes can you make?</p> 	<p>Look up Morse code online or in a library book. Write messages to a friend using dots (•) and dashes (—) to spell the words.</p> 	<p>Fill a clean bottle $\frac{2}{3}$ full of water, add two drops of food coloring, and top off with cooking oil. Close the bottle, turn it on its side, and rock it to make "waves."</p>
<p>Draw as many American symbols as you can think of. Examples: bald eagle, White House, Statue of Liberty.</p> 	<p>Read a short book. Then, tell someone the story from a different character's point of view. For example, use the dog as the narrator.</p>	<p>Number slips of paper 1–25. Have someone mix them up and put all except one on the table. How fast can you identify the missing number? Then, swap roles.</p> 	<p>Write a story starting with this sentence: "If I could parachute to the past, I would go to..."</p>	<p>Print a word in big letters, and hold your paper with the letters facing a mirror. What do you notice? Can you write a word so it won't be backward in the mirror?</p>	<p>Draw an imaginary continent, and give the places fun names. "Runaway River" might flow into "Alligator Swamp," for instance.</p>	<p>Ask each family member to find a poem in a book or on a website. Trade poems, and read each other's selections aloud.</p>
<p>In a democracy, citizens vote to make decisions fairly. Hold a family election to vote on an issue, such as which board game to play or what kind of pizza to order.</p> 	<p>Try to make echoes by singing in different spaces (kitchen, bathroom, yard, garage). Why do some places create echoes while others don't?</p>	<p>Take turns inventing "active patterns" to do. Example: Hop twice, take three big steps and three small steps, and repeat.</p>	